

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 SCI-06 SAJ-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /113 W

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P 280936Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3998

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3370

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: CSM CORRESPONDENT ELIZABETH POND NO LONGER WELCOME IN ROK

1. FOREIGN MINISTER LHO SHIN-YONG CALLED IN CHARGE MAY 28 TO PASS WORD THAT ROKG WILL NO LONGER WELCOME VISITS TO KOREA BY TOKYO-BASED CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR CORRESPONDENT ELIZABETH POND. LHO SAID ROKG DEEPLY REGRETTED NECESSITY TO EXCLUDE MISS POND FROM KOREA. HOWEVER, ANALYSIS BY GOVT AGENCIES HAD DISCLOSED THAT 12 OUT OF 15 OF HER ARTICLES CONTAIN "SLANDEROUS" MATERIAL ON ROK AND PRESIDENT PARK. IN CHARACTERIZING MAY 22 ARTICLE ENTITLED "SOUTH KOREA'S NEW TROUBLES" AS ESPECIALLY OFFENSIVE, LHO SINGLED OUT PARAGRAPH WHICH STATES THAT SOME SOUTH KOREANS HAD BEEN ASKING WHETHER PRESIDENT PARK REALLY IS IN LEAGUE WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND IS DOING WHAT WILL HELP THEM THE MOST. ROKG HAD DECIDED IT COULD NOT TOLERATE SUCH REFERENCES TO CHIEF OF STATE AND HAD THEREFORE DECIDED THAT MISS POND WOULD NO LONGER BE WELCOME TO COME HERE.

2. LHO SAID ROK AMBASSADOR HAHM HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO EXPLAIN REASON FOR ROKG ACTION DIRECTLY TO DEPT. AMB HAHM HAS ALSO BEEN INSTRUCTED TO GO PERSONALLY TO CSM HEADQUARTERS AND MAKE SIMILAR EXPLANATION TO CSM MANAGEMENT. HE WILL STATE THAT EXCLUSION APPLIES ONLY TO MISS POND, NOT OTHER CSM CORRESPONDENTS.

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3. ACCORDING LHO, ROK AMBASSADOR IN TOKYO HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO

INVITE MISS POND TO VISIT EMBASSY, AND TO INFORM HER THAT SHE IS NO LONGER WELCOME IN KOREA AND THAT HER VISA SHOULD BE CONSIDERED NULL AND VOID. HIS INSTRUCTIONS DID NOT STATE HE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO ALTER PASSPORT VISA. LHO SAID ROKG HOPED THAT MISS POND WOULD ACCEPT ITS DECISION. HE ASSUMED THAT SHE WOULD SIMPLY BE DEPORTED SHOULD SHE AGAIN ATTEMPT TO ENTER KOREA.

4. IN RESPONSE CHARGE QUERY, LHO WAS EVASIVE WITH RESPECT TO LEVEL AT WHICH ROK DECISION HAD BEEN MADE, SAYING ONLY THAT BASIC RECOMMENDATION HAD BEEN MADE BY FOREIGN AND INFORMATION MINISTRIES AND ACCEPTED BY "HIGHER AUTHORITY." HE SAID THAT ROKG DID NOT INTEND PUBLICIZE THIS ACTION BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CSM PROBABLY WOULD. HE LIKewise ACKNOWLEDGED PROBABILITY THAT ACTION WOULD DRAW CRITICAL COMMENT FROM AMERICAN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL PRESS BUT SAID THAT THIS HAD BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN COURSE OF DECISION PROCESS.

5. CHARGE SAID IT REGRETTABLE THAT LATEST POND ARTICLE CONTAINED MATERIAL REFLECTING ADVERSELY ON PRESIDENT PARK, BUT THAT IT EQUALLY REGRETTABLE ROKG HAD FOUND IT NECESSARY TO TAKE STEP THAT WOULD BE WIDELY INTERPRETED AS ABRIDGEMENT OF PRESS FREEDOM.

6. SUGGEST EMBASSY AND DEPT TAKE FOLLOWING LINE IN EVENT PRESS QUERIES: "WE WERE MADE AWARE OF THE ROKG INTENTIONS TOWARD MISS POND. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE ROKG AND INFORMED THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. WE WILL HAVE NO FURTHER COMMENT ON THIS SUBJECT AT THIS TIME."
ERICSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, EXPULSION, JOURNALISTS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SEOUL03370
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740133-0127
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740514/aaaaalrn.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUN 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 JUL 2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by GolinoFR>; WITHDRAWN <13 Jun 2005 by BoyleJA, PRIVACY>; RELEASED <16 JUN 2005 by powellba2>; APPROVED <20 JUN 2005 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CSM CORRESPONDENT ELIZABETH POND NO LONGER WELCOME IN ROK
TAGS: PFOR, KS, US, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, (POND, ELIZABETH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005